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A black and white photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a bar. The woman, on the left, has short dark hair and is wearing a light blue ribbed turtleneck sweater. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile and is holding a glass of beer. The man, on the right, has short dark hair and is wearing a dark jacket over a plaid shirt. He is looking down at his glass of beer. In the foreground, on the left, there is a lit red candle in a glass holder. On the right, there is an ashtray containing an ash. The background is blurred, showing other people and a bar counter.

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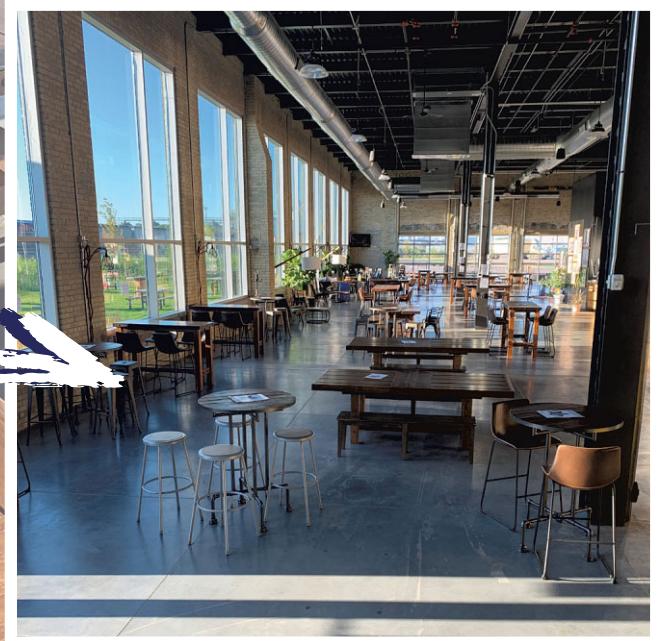
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...We did it again

By Jerard Fagerberg

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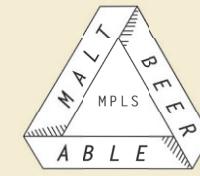
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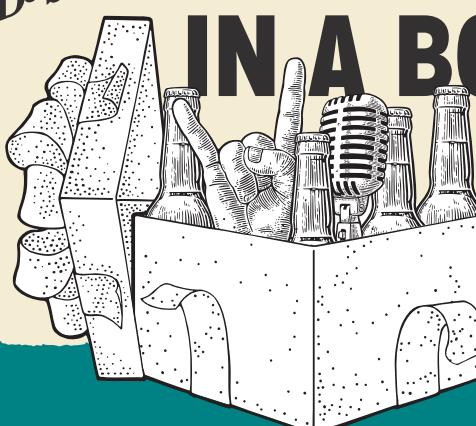
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THE SHORTLIST



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deal collapses
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THE STAT SHEET

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**"I love hearing the religious talk about
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Reader Michael Bullerman responds to
"Minnesota priest says COVID is 'man-
made,' forthcoming vaccines 'heinous'"
at citypages.com.

COVID SHUFFLE

ONE OF THE TRICKIEST things about conducting yourself safely in the time of coronavirus is that there's conflicting information everywhere—even from the CDC itself. On Friday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shifted guidelines to state that the virus can transmit over distances beyond 6 feet. On Sunday, CNN noticed and reported on the change. On Monday, the CDC quickly and quietly took out the phrasing that said it was "possible" to spread the virus via airborne transmission. The reversal means more uncertainty—and further debate about how we're supposed to stop COVID-19.

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COVID CAMPUS

U of M students party in huge crowds

The University of Minnesota is getting the academic year off to a careful start, while trying to prevent the spread of COVID-19 with what it's calling the Maroon and Gold Sunrise plan.

The plan dictates a strict set of rules for students choosing to live in campus housing. Unless they're working, attending class, going to appointments, or using a campus facility like a dining hall or a library, they're supposed to remain in their dorms. If they're outside, they're supposed to remain six feet from one another.

"We know these requirements are different from any other year," the plan says. "There will be special activities planned for all residence halls to help you connect with others in ways that abide by physical distancing and other public health guidance."

Posts on social media will inspire skepticism that students are off to a good start.

A U of M chemistry student posted video of a large group of students huddled together

on campus on Saturday, saying the university's Sunrise plan was "failing miserably." Her thread included a few party scenes, including one of a kid in a sweatshirt who was apparently crowd-surfing.

All in all, it looked like an A for fun and an F for social distancing. The student said freshmen have been doing this "every day since they moved in on Tuesday" and "no one at the university will help."

This student wasn't the only one taking to social media about unsafe activity. Another student tweeted at the "200+ UMN freshmen partying outside superblock last night" on Sunday and told them to get their "stupid covid-spreading asses" off campus.

One tweeted directly at the university and warned they were "gonna end up like [the University of Wisconsin] Madison," which has suspended face-to-face classes after an outbreak of reported COVID-19 cases.

The Sunrise plan includes a note saying that students are expected to follow the guidelines, "with the understanding

that disciplinary action may be taken when expectations are not met."

The university sent a statement saying it was aware of the gathering over the weekend.

"Housing and Residential Life staff dispersed the crowd with help from the University of Minnesota Police Department," it said. "The University is reviewing any existing video of the event and will follow up with identified students, as appropriate."

But the university took care to say that most students are following the Sunrise plan, and that this kind of gathering is "not at all unique" in terms of a normal opening weekend. The only thing that's changed are the circumstances.

It's easy to get down on freshmen for purportedly being unsafe, but there are just as many posts on Twin Cities social media from students who have been isolated and disillusioned since the new semester started, and don't know what to do about it. Why let them come to campus, they ask, if they can't be with one another anyway?



TWITTER

"What am I supposed to do outside of the time I spend studying and in class?" one asks. "I don't want to go out and be irresponsible... it gets lonely."

The next step of the U's plan would have been to allow the use of student unions and the surrounding community, with a 9 p.m. curfew instated. It's supposed to take effect around the end of the month, if all goes well. —HANNAH JONES



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BY JERARD FAGERBERG

I drank a lot of beer in the last year. Odds are good you did, too. The consistently excellent output of Minnesota breweries has been among the only abiding comforts of 2020. In spite of [gestures idiotically] everything, the quality of locally made beer has been resilient—to the point where we're called to re-evaluate everything we said a year ago.

Last year's 40 best beers in Minnesota list was a stab at a definitive, across-the-board power ranking of beers made in the Gopher State. But you ever try to rank a Russian imperial stout against a hazy IPA? It's like weighing Tupac against Zeppelin. A good excuse to argue, sure, but ultimately not that useful.

This year, after drinking innumerable beers and having way too much free time to think about them, City Pages decided to break up the Beer Issue into four top-10 lists. This way, we can compare the apples with the apples in the search of the best IPAs, lagers, stouts, and sours made statewide.

Again, I've had a lot of beer, so we may need to do this again next year. But right now, these are the best of their kind.

MINNESOTA'S 10 BEST IPAS

Once a *distinct* and ostracized style, the IPA has become the largest and most varied category of beer on the market. You really have to dig into the secondary signifiers—"dank," "resinous," and the ubiquitous "hazy"—to understand anything about the beer you're buying.

Despite the relative meaninglessness of the term "IPA," the popularity of the style persists. Last year, IPAs accounted for 31.5% of craft beer sales. IPA is such a dominant category that there's no real purpose in ranking any beers without first addressing the many-headed monster in the middle of the room.

10. Town Hall Masala Mama

Forgive yourself if you're bored of all the praise Masala Mama has been getting for the past 17 years. The sustained adulation for Town Hall's bronzy West Coast IPA begs for a contrarian take. Masala sits in the top 250 beers on BeerAdvocate, and outstate reviewers are often not impressed with its restrained approach to greatness. A sturdy malt bill and sharp, hoppy nose aren't all that rare, after all, but achieving the perfect balance between the two is a rare feat. Maybe not the most exhilarating pedigree, but any list of Minnesota beers would be incomplete without it. Drink on cask whenever available.

9. Voyageur Devil's Kettle

The scenic shores of Grand Marais are made even more enjoyable atop the roof



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of Voyageur Brewing's harborside taproom. From that vantage, you can take in everything the placid artists' haven has to offer, including one of the best beers made north of Duluth. Devil's Kettle pays homage to the nearby Cook County waterfall with a cascade of bitterness. Yeah, that's authentic Northwoods pine on the nose, and the body is a scenic orange—same color as Lake Superior when the sun goes down in August.

8. HammerHeart Surtr's Flame

If you've seen *Thor: Ragnarok*, you're probably familiar with Surtur—the big, dimwitted fire giant prophesied to bring the downfall of Asgard and sworn enemy of Odin. Lino Lakes smoke factory HammerHeart Brewing took the big lunk from Muspelheim as the inspiration for their house IPA. Surtr's Flame is a citrus jolt masked in a cloud of cherry smoke, though it finishes dry enough that you'll ask for another. A devilish beer that, like its Marvel namesake, threatens to burn the IPA establishment to embers.

7. BlackStack Local 755

No one in the Twin Cities beer scene has more fun than the Johnson family. Proprietors of St. Paul's BlackStack Brewing, Scott and his sons Murph, Shawne, and Cooper and daughter Quinn release a



JERARD FAGERBERG

new Drake-inspired IPA seemingly every week. But it's their house beer, Local 755, that grounds them. Named for their address on Prior Avenue, Local 755 is the very foundation of BlackStack. A cloud of Azacca and Amarillo and "a gwop of Citra" power this super-fruity specialty. Juice runs through the Johnson family's veins, and you can tap their legacy any time you're thirsty.

6. Modist Dreamyard

What do hopheads dream of? An impenetrable haze. Mosaic and Citra that dance out of the can. Four-packs of squishy beer that cost less than \$20. Modist has been delivering on all that and more ever since they launched Dreamyard. With a malt bill of 100% wheat and oats, it's one of the softest, most decadent New Englands on the market. And with an average cost of around \$13 a pack, it's the best value you can get while still scratching your juice itch. If you need a stronger dose, Modist has a silkier, even more bountifully hopped Double Dreamyard that appears on the market once or twice a year.

5. Lupulin Hooey

In three short years, Hooey has gone from iconoclast to classic. So many New England IPAs are on the shelves mere minutes before they're scooped up, and though



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Lupulin has plenty of special releases and one-offs to keep the van chasers happy. Hooey has become a dependable standby, the kind of beer you toss into the cart on a whim because you know this batch will be just as succulent as the last. World-class beer is rarely this casual.

4. Fair State Mirror Universe

In another world, Fair State Brewing Cooperative is the Treehouse of Minnesota. Haze bros from across the country line up at their door every Saturday, greedily filling their trunks with the latest exclusive drop. Trading forums light up with offers to swap the Mouteka version of Mirror Universe for the 2019 cryo-hopped one-off. But that's not the destiny Fair State chose in this reality. Instead of leaning full-bore into the NE IPA craze, they stuck by their principles of devoted everyman beer. Mirror Universe stands as their most prominent concession, a peek into a parallel timeline where they're the masters of Midwest haze.

3. Steel Toe Size 7

Size 7 used to be the one-size-fits-all solution for IPAs in Minnesota: If it's on the menu, you order it without question. Since the debut of the West Coast IPA, the entire beer world has shifted its favor, but Steel Toe's flagship IPA is standing by, reliable as ever. The joy of this high-IBU resin bomb is now in its constant rediscovery. "Oh yeah," you say to yourself whenever you see it on the local IPA shelf, "I forgot how much I loved this beer." Before long, you're sitting on your porch with an empty cardboard caddy and the pleasant sting of bitterness on your lips.

MINNESOTA'S 10 BEST LAGERS

There was a time when the lager was king. That time is coming again.

Prior to the current craft beer boom, Grain Belt, Hamm's, and Schmidt frothed freely across the landscape, holding domin-

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ion over taplines statewide. Then, in the late 2000s, IPAs came along and unseated the fizzy yellow overlord as Minnesota's most celebrated variety.

But the love for lagers never went away. They're the craft brewer's not-so-guilty pleasure, and more and more, menus are filling with top-flight pilsners, bocks, and helles lagers. It won't be long before these bottom-fermenting varieties rise again to the top.

10. Lake Monster Como Claw

An extra dose of hops in a Bohemian pilsener can play as either genius or blasphemy. St. Paul's Lake Monster Brewing dares for a brighter, more citrus-forward hop blend in their flagship Como Claw. Formerly known as Calhoun Claw, Como Claw serves up a barnload of golden honey malts, but then a boost of grassy hops spikes the sip. Not the most by-the-books interpretation, but worthy of being recognized amongst the traditionalists.

9. Bent Paddle Venture Pils

The North Shore embodies Minnesota's spirit of adventure, and Venture Pils is the beer that embodies the North Shore. Outfitters in the Boundary Waters should keep a stock of Bent Paddle's goes-anywhere pilsner for travelers voyaging north. When you're trekking into untapped terrain, this light-bodied standby will guide you,

steady and familiar as a good compass. A six-pack steels the nerves for a night of portaging into gray wolf territory. Float a cooler full of it off the side of your canoe for when the wild sun burns down on the open water.

8. Bauhaus Stargrazer

Dark lagers always come with garbled German titles like "Schwarzbier." But garbled German is the calling card of Bauhaus Brew Labs, so of course their Schwarz Stargrazer is the best—and one of the only—of its kind on the Minnesota market. Dark as a porter but light as a golden ale, Stargrazer is a truly out-of-this-world phenomenon. And you, lager astronaut, are rewarded for going outside your comfort zone with a crisp-finishing shot of vanilla in every can.

7. Eastlake Southside Pils

Blue-collar south Minneapolis could not be epitomized more perfectly than it is in Southside Pils. Simple but rich, it's an easy-drinking beer for an after-shift walk through Sibley Park or a weekend float down Minnehaha Creek. It captures the jocular bliss of May Day and the eclectic, everyman spirit of Seward in Autumn. If you're not native to the South Side, you can stop in Eastlake's taproom off Lake Street and get a crash course on local culture in pint form.

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6. Barrel Theory Rage Quit

Ever go into the liquor store, walk over to the local beer section, and throw up your hands in defeat? It's wall-to-wall juice bombs, \$15 a four-pack, each one inscrutable from the last. 2020 City Pages Best Brewery Barrel Theory brewed Rage Quit as a gimmick-erasing reset for your palate. A straight-up Czech pilsner without a hint of haze, Rage Quit will make you reconnect with the essence of beer. Each sip activates your innate beer lover with its clarity-restoring crispness—a pint of Zen in the double dry-hopped chaos of the age.

5. Schell's Keller Pils

When Summit released an unfiltered pilsner to near-universal adulation, they must've known they were throwing down the gauntlet. Traditional Bohemian lager is Schell's territory, and the New Ulm standard-bearers responded in kind last year with their own sensational year-round zwickel. Keller Pils stares down its competition, matching it blow for blow in clarity, aroma, and crispness. A former taproom exclusive punched up with a late dose of wildberry Callista hops, Keller Pils hit the market in cans last year, though it hasn't gotten its full due just yet.

4. Town Hall Saaz Pilz

The Good Lord was on a hot streak the day he created the Saaz hop. The noble Czech hop variety was made famous as the workhorse ingredient in Stella Artois, but in a better beer, it really shines. Town Hall made Saaz Pilz as a golden pedestal

for the gentle, herbal bitterness of Saaz. A sparkling clear body and peaking foam head deliver the old-world hop in a perfect vessel, a pint crafted in Pilsen and translated to Minnesota-made perfection.

3. Fair State Vienna Lager

Due to declining sales, Fair State demoted Vienna Lager to a seasonal release in 2019. Consider this an official letter of protest. Though you can still get this toasty Austrian amber lager on tap year-round, its presence is sorely missed during spring's early days and the despairing depths of winter. We should be able to rely on its presence in the liquor store, its label shining from the shelf like a familiar friend. Instead, it's a cautionary tale of how even the most exquisite classical styles can get lost in the churn of the hype machine.

2. Bad Weather Munich Helles

Munich lager was introduced in the late 1800s as a German-made competitor to the Bohemian pilsners ascending in popularity. At first, the bier meisters considered it blasphemy. History has not vindicated their objections, and a well-made, bready Munich-style helles is now considered an ultimate achievement. Like its predecessors, Bad Weather's Munich Helles is underappreciated in its time. Come June, when Munich Helles releases, their St. Paul patio becomes beer drinker Eden for those wise enough to recognize it as Minnesota's own Weihenstephaner.

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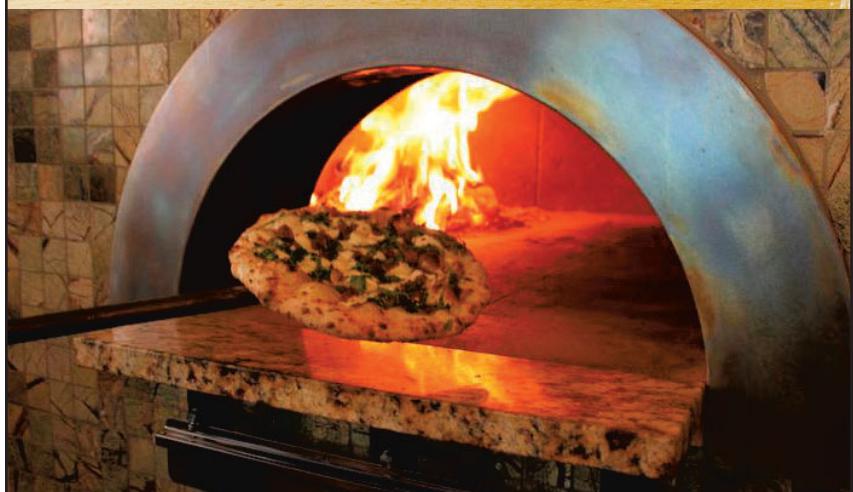
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onto the scene as a limited 30th anniversary beer in 2016, Summit Keller Pils has been the toast of the beer world. Great American Beerfest gold. World Beer Cup bronze. Near-perfect scores across BeerAdvocate, Rate Beer, and Untappd. This level of hype is rarely seen surrounding an unfiltered German lager from St. Paul, but after one sip, you'll get it. Keller Pils is undeniable.

Honorable mentions: Summit Dakota Soul, Utepils Springbok, Fair State Pils

MINNESOTA'S 10 BEST STOUTS

In last year's *Beer Issue*, we examined how the Russian imperial stout has become a proving ground for Minnesota breweries. If you can make a decent takeoff of Surly Darkness, you've earned a crucial bona fide. But the stout world is much bigger than the RIS.

The stout—the traditional dark ale pub fare—is a deeply charismatic variety of beer. From milk stouts to oyster stouts to white stouts to coffee stouts, there's plenty to be celebrated outside of the niche Surly created. This year, let's zoom in on the best American and English-style stouts on the local market.

JERARD FAGERBERG



Oh, and no porters, either. That's an argument for another list.

10. Castle Danger George Hunter Stout

George Hunter got done dirty by Prohibition. Hunter owned Iron Range Brewing Co. in Tower, Minnesota, until the Puritans shut him down. Luckily his great-great grandson Clint MacFarlane went on to open Castle Danger Brewing, and he never forgot the trials of his forebearer. George Hunter Stout is a tribute to the old ways—a good brown beer any brewery in the 1920s could've staked their reputation on. It's the kind of liquid molasses an Irish immigrant like Hunter would've used to fortify himself for a long Minnesota winter up North.

9. La Doña Enmolada

A good mole takes an entire day to make and only seconds to consume. It's also 0% ABV. But La Doña Cervecería brewer Dicky Lopez took the dark fruits, roasted chocolate, and earthy spice of this traditional Mexican sauce and translated it into a 7% stout you can get any time. Enmolada is a love letter from La Doña to their Minneapolis neighbors, a spicy, warm stout built with all the care of a traditional mole left to simmer in the kitchen. Just one pull on the tap handle, and you're drinking in an all-day labor of love.

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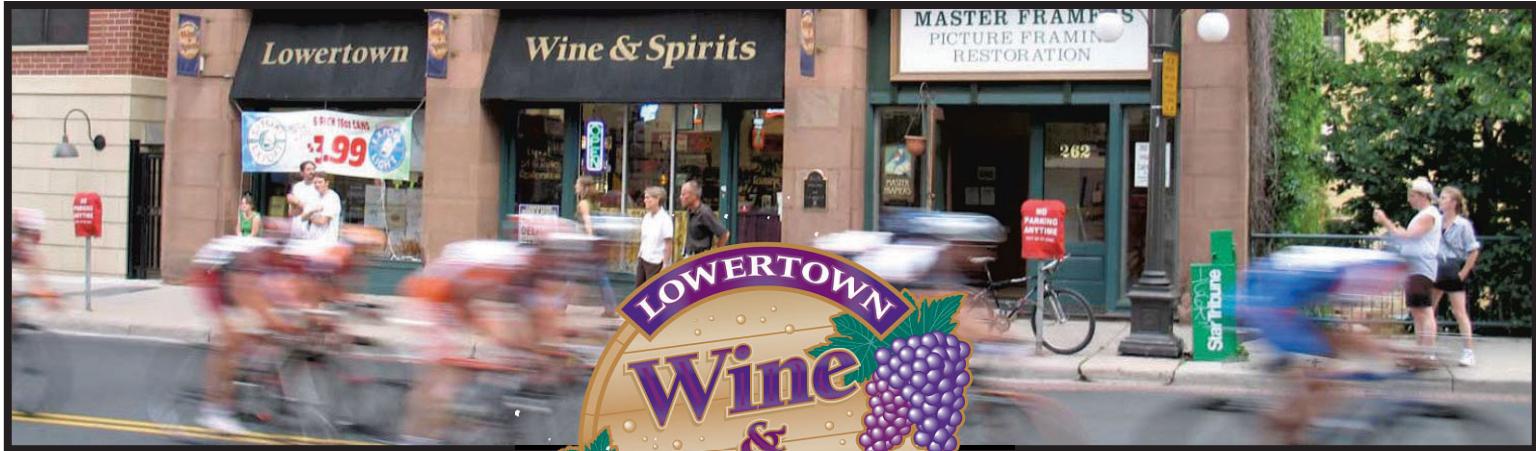
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8. Town Hall Three Hour Tour

Gilligan's Island went off the air in 1967, but queue up an episode, and it still holds up. Like the golden age CBS sitcom, Minneapolis's Town Hall Brewery has struggled to compete for relevance with the young generation, but beers like Three Hour Tour are a good reminder why timelessness trumps relevance every time. The combination of coconut, lactose, and English malts works in a way that feels familiar from the first sips—especially when you drink it on nitro in the patinated environs of Town Hall's Seven Corners taproom. It's enough to make you nostalgic for a time you never lived through.

7. Dangerous Man Chocolate Milk Stout

You're an adult now, so that means you can drink chocolate milk whenever you want. Better than that, you can drink it in beer form. Chocolate Milk Stout was one of Dangerous Man's first attraction beers. Though often overlooked in favor of fellow mainstay Peanut Butter Porter (no. 6 on last year's list), Chocolate Milk Stout is remarkable for the way it instantly transports you back to childhood. The silky body, the big aroma of powdered cocoa, both delivered with Hershey's smoothness. Beer drinking is an explicitly grown-up activity, but there's no reason you can't indulge your inner child while you're at it.

6. Able BLK WLF

The American low-ABV revolution has largely left stouts out of the pack. And so Northeast's Able Seedhouse + Brew-

ery brewed a lone wolf—a 3.7% pub-style prowler that would be at home in any Irish pub but feels almost rebellious stateside. A beer with such a sturdy caramel body and resplendent malt sweetness should not go down with such little effort. It feels like a trick, but this is a beast that our compatriots in the U.K. and Ireland have long been familiar with. No need to maul yourself over a couple drinks; BLK WLF will keep you steady pint after pint.

5. Pryes Dublin Dry Stout

Speaking of well-made transatlantic stouts, has anyone recreated the experience of Guinness as remarkably as North's Pryes Brewing? Their congenial Dublin Dry Stout has been crowned in laurel by the North American Brewers Association, International Beer Awards, Minnesota Brewers Cup Awards, and City Pages (no. 12 in last year's list). As a matter of fact, we've made a habit of harping on how good this beer is. It's a crowd-pleaser made of toast points and molasses. Drinking it feels like getting a hug from a burly friend in Aran wool. Slainte indeed.

4. Junkyard King Size

Imagine someone liquefied a pallet of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and fermented them into a puddle of foamy velvet. That's Junkyard King Size, the most decadent stout in Minnesota. The Moorhead-made imperial stout rings in at a jumbo-sized 11.3% ABV, but you won't notice the burn underneath the vortex of creamy peanut butter and milk chocolate swirling in your mouth. Suck it down before it gives you a cavity.



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3. Summit Dark Infusion

Dark Infusion wasn't supposed to be a hit. Originally entry no. 23 in the (now defunct) Unchained Series, the sweet coffee milk stout was supposed to be one and done, retired to the recipe catalog after its brief liaison. The public was incensed, and they demanded it return. In 2018, it became a fall seasonal. This year, Summit made a slight tweak, adding Big Watt cold brew to the recipe, making Dark Infusion even smoother and bolder with a kick of java. The beer has become a testament to the benefit of continued innovation, and irrefutable evidence that Summit should bring the Unchained Series back to market.

2. Lupulin Coffee Shop Assault Vehicle

The beans that Paradise Roasters gave to Lupulin are artillery-grade. The green java was aged in bourbon barrels, giving it a woody booze essence before it was even roasted. Lupulin took the little bullets of Kentucky coffee, added cocoa nibs, and infused them into a powerful 12% stout. Lupulin has a deep corps of top-end stouts—Polarnattens Paradis, Strange Illusion, Imperial Raspberry Truffle—but Coffee Shop Assault Vehicle ranks above them all for its aggressive punch of choco-caffeine.

1. Forager Nillerzzzzz

The most exclusive beer on any of these lists, Nillerzzzzz is released on what has become a veritable beer holiday. Score enough bottles of Forager's fudgy whiskey-aged vanilla bean double stout, and you'll have currency to trade for any other beer made in America. The flavor

Minnesota's Best **HARD SELTZERS**

Hard seltzer is now a fixture of the brewing industry. Get used to it. Much like Untappd and venture capital, hard seltzer has jolted craft beer further into the mainstream all while making the industry's progenitors very uncomfortable.

Hard seltzer accounted for \$1.75 billion in sales last year, a number that's projected to triple by 2023. Locals have taken notice, and seltzers are becoming must-have menu items for local craft breweries. Time to accept seltzer into the beer world, with these locally made White Claws.

10. HULA Mango Papaya
9. Fair State Hibiscus + Orange
8. Lift Bridge Blue Agave Margarita
7. BOLO Dragonfruit
6. Spiral Brewing Pineapple Coconut
5. Squoze Tangerine
4. Fulton Hopped!
3. Wooden Hill Hazy Pomelo
2. Lift Bridge St. Croix Berries
1. BOLO Sour Watermelon

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Honorable mentions: Indeed Rum King, Spiral Hard Left, Inbound Peanut Butter Milk Stout

MINNESOTA'S 10 BEST SOURS

Sour beers aren't a "style," at least not by the Beer Judge Certification Program's standards. What they are is an incredible spectrum of beers modulated by the whims of unpredictable strains of yeast. Brettanomyces, lactobacillus, and Pediococcus might not be household names, but the three strains of souring yeast have made their way into fridges across the Gopher State.

There are entire festivals devoted to the funk and tartness of spontaneously fermented beers, celebrating the non-traditional flavors that have invited so many new drinkers into the beer world. Whether they be traditionally soured in oak foeders or quickly lactoed in a stainless steel



JERARD FAGGERBERG

kettle, this strange vanguard of beers invites drinkers from all over the spectrum to test their palates.

10. Pryes Royal Raspberry

When Pryes Brewing finally released Miraculum IPA in cans in 2018, it didn't

hit liquor stores alone. Royal Raspberry came right alongside, matching Miraculum's floral bitterness with fruity tart, two foils packed in aluminum. One beer represented the brewery's past, the other its future in its new Near North home. The fruited Berliner has the consistency of

pink wine, providing the new-look brewery with a contemporary flagship for its next decade.

9. Disgruntled Caught in the Candy

Cotton candy is flimsy and saccharine. It evaporates the second it touches your tongue, leaving you with little more than pink lips and regret. But thanks to Disgruntled Brewing, the disappointing State Fair treat is given purpose. Caught in the Candy is a beer that should not work. The combination of candy floss, strawberry, vanilla, and marshmallow should be a nuke to the palate, but a dose of lemon tempers the brew. For maybe the first time ever, you can truly savor the taste of cotton candy.

8. Fair State Roselle

Fair State has had a kaleidoscope of different sours go through its taproom, but they never seem to stick around long (RIP BFDP). That's part of the fun of wild fermentation—you're mixing a bunch of experimental ingredients and hoping you get a flavor that pushes the boundaries of your palate. Though it started out as one of the experimental fancies in the Lactobäc series, Roselle is the antithesis of so many of Fair State's sours. Steady, dependable, and not altogether confron-





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tational, Roselle has become eminently popular for its refreshment quality, a product of lactobacillus working with late-addition hibiscus. It drinks like a crisp French rosé.

7. Forager Gummies Make Us Likeable

Forager doesn't actually use Haribos in the making of Gummies Make Us Likeable, their imperial Berliner. The beer's combination of guava, passionfruit, and mango accomplishes the same sticky satisfaction with only natural sugar. The Gummies Make Us Likeable - Medical Grade variant (made with pomegranate, blueberries, and aronia berries) goes so far as to promise "health benefits," but that's just marketing. This one's as sinful as it sounds.

6. Wild Minds Pash Bash

Have you ever looked at a passionfruit? It's horrifying. The flesh looks like a dead fish's eye full of a thousand goopy seeds. But these disgusting berries have an intoxicating aroma, and they're the perfect muse for a funky sour. Pash Bash is actually a blend of three beers—Wild Minds took a golden kettle sour, a Foeder sour, and a Brett sour and topped the mixture with 700 lbs of passionfruit and dragon fruit puree. It comes out a high-acid satin pink, leaking a sharp and juicy aroma. It's gorgeous from the first drop, a far cry from the ghastly fruit that made it.

5. Indeed Wooden Soul: Heliotropic

Though Indeed's Lucy and Strawberry Fields kettle sours are by far their most popular, their love of and devotion to spontaneous beer is showcased in the Wooden Soul series. Wooden Soul was kicked off with Heliotropic, a glorious golden Brett saison aged in oak barrels for an entire year. An effervescent beer with a complex hay-like aroma, it set the tone for a strong run of 20 other sours, each of which has strived to outdo the standard-setting original.

4. Boom Island Oude Funk

Now resettled in Minnetonka, Boom Island Brewing has perfumed the air in the Southwest suburb with woody esters and barnyard funk. Oude Funk is the culprit, a geuze-style ale that smells like a grain silo in Bouillon on a dewy morning. Oude Funk is the flagship of the Spontaneous Series, a limited line that makes startling sours with precise Belgian methods, and it's about the closest you can get to an authentic trappist beer without leaving the metro.

3. Barrel Theory Key Sublime

Barrel Theory brewers don't practice Santería, but their skills with lactobacillus are near-magical. Key Sublime is the height of their powers, a Berliner Weisse that mocks the Gods with its preternatural affinity to key lime pie. Barrel Theory pulls it off with key lime juice, vanilla, and



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cinnamon, but the trick happens in the kettle, where lacto is unleashed to bring the ingredients and beer together in a lip-smacking mimicry. The only thing missing is the graham cracker crust.

2. Dangerous Man Sour Delores: Passionfruit

No idea who Delores is, but shoutout to her for inspiring one the most consistent lines of sour beers made in the Twin Cities. The Sour Delores lineup from Dangerous Man began with a blueberry Berliner, and it's only advanced in flavor and complexity since. The Northeast mainstay hit a high-water mark in 2016 when the first passionfruit variant hit the taproom. Since then, Sour Delores no. 14 has come and gone, sometimes intermixing with pineapple, always blowing the doors off drinkers.

1. Schell's Framboise Du Nord

Most mid-size breweries have some kind of in-house sour line. Only one has a totally separate brand. The Noble Star Collection is, in some ways, a far cry from the classic German stylings of Schell's primary brewery, but in others, it's a natural continuation of their zeal for tradition. Framboise Du Nord is an exemplary red sour, made by taking the vaunted Star of the North sour and aging it for four months on raspberries. Tart and bright, it's a far cry from Firebrick, but the soul is the same.

Honorable mentions: Junkyard Super Slurp, Eastlake Kirby Pucker, Bent Brewstillery Funked Up

Minnesota's Best CRAFT MACROS

Craft beer has come full circle. Once, brewers stood in proud defiance of beers like Schlitz and Pabst Blue Ribbon. These days local crews are going to market with their own Hamm's clones to prove they can play on the same field as the Big Boys and show them up at their own game.

The upscaling of the lawnmower beer has been an unexpected but welcome turn. Now, if you're gonna go budget for the evening, you don't have to give your money to MolsonCoors or AB InBev. They're making the cheap stuff right in your backyard.

10. Third Street Minnesota Golden Lager
9. Omni Lager
8. Mankato Kato Lager
7. Fulton Standard Lager
6. Indeed Hello, Milwaukee
5. Bad Habit Bennie Lager
4. Bauhaus Homeguys
3. Bent Paddle Classic
2. Able Ol' Trusty
1. Fair State/Modern Times Crankin' Foamers

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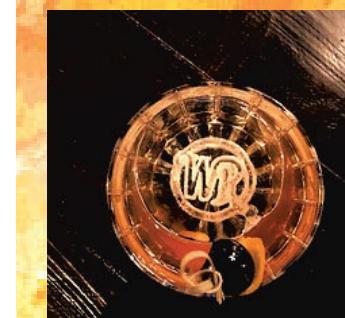
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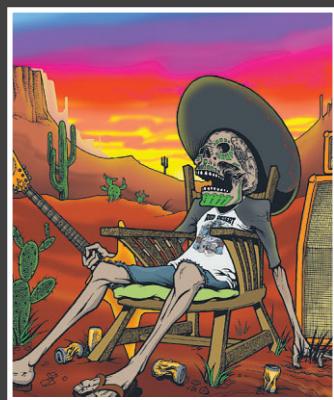
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BY SARAH BRUMBLE

What do you think is the most captivating (legal) cookie available on the market right now?

Opinions be what they may, but the only acceptable answer here comes piled high with red, white, and blue frosting, and can be found in Red Wing. Each costs \$4, and will be counted as a vote for president. Sort of.

Every four years, Hanisch Bakery and Coffee Shop celebrates democracy in the sweetest way possible: by hosting the Presidential Cookie Poll. "It's a fun election poll that just happens to be pretty darn accurate for some reason," says Bill Hanisch, the establishment's chief manager and owner.

In the 1920s, the bakery was called Quandt's. It's undergone several ownership and name changes since then, but Hanisch is sure the Braschler family conceived of the cookie poll we recognize today during the Mondale-Reagan election because he worked under them starting when he was 15 years old. Though he's not certain why the poll first ran back in 1984, the current owner bets it was a simple move to drum up business.

When Hanisch bought the bakery in 2007, he understood he would also become ringmaster for a unique political circus that's getting more unwieldy each election cycle. So far this year, Trump's cookies have outsold Biden's by a mile.

But what might that mean, if anything?

Hanisch begins by explaining: "Our cookie poll has always followed the popular vote, including in 2016 for Hillary Clinton, and 2000 when Al Gore won." Complicating this spooky, 36-year streak further, the bakery's poll hasn't been wed to a two-party system. Back in 1992, the Braschlers added a Ross Perot cookie into the mix... and when the (actual) polls closed, it still didn't mess with results. The cookies and ballots aligned with a nation swooning for the sax appeal of Hillary's husband.

Today's Presidential Cookie Poll has been 99 percent untouched since the Mondale-Reagan election, despite the social, cultural, and technological norms changing around it. The purchase of one cookie—each frosted in buttercream that takes 18 pounds of butter per batch, and scrawled with the candidate's name—counts as one "vote." Say a 12-year-old walks in and buys a dozen cookies for Candidate X; that counts as 12 votes for Candidate X. She's free to do it again the next day, too.

Sales clerks hand-tally the cookies as

FORTUNE COOKIES?

Inside the psyche of Red Wing's stuffable ballot box



SARAH BRUMBLE

they're sold, right in front of you. Everyone stuffs this ballot box out in the open.

Though it started as a sweet little lark—just a bakery in a picturesque town on the Mississippi River engaging the body politic and making a buck—with each passing year it can feel harder to take the Presidential Cookie Poll lightly.

"Our numbers with Obama/Romney were really big, a back-and-forth battle toward the end," Hanisch said, referencing the bakery's poll evolving with the times. "Then as we got some social media [attention], the Romney supporters tried to influence it. Because of 2012 we no longer give out numbers on Election Day. I did [hourly then], and this one guy came in and bought however many Romney cookies he needed to put Romney in the lead. He didn't even get the cookies—he just gave me the money."

Beyond the numbers, even customer behavior mimics the overall mood of voters in a particular election cycle. Hanisch says cookie numbers were down overall in 2016, and customers were less ostentatious while making their purchases.

"It felt like no one wanted to say who they were voting for, and it reflected in the cookie poll numbers."

This year, a WCCO segment was distributed to Los Angeles and Massachusetts CBS affiliate stations, substantially raising the bakery's profile. At one point, Hanisch says he was greeted with 96 emails at once asking if they'd ship cookies to either coast. (They won't, but thanks for asking.)

This, too, touches on the customer base the cookie poll attracts (and counts). "It's not just a representation of Red Wing," says the baker, who noted an uptick in sales during the summer months. "Especially this year, we've had a really large influx from the metro area, with people just trying to get out and enjoy themselves."

Hopefully without taking the fun out of the poll—something its operator loathes, and says participants from both sides of the aisle are wont to do—we asked someone whose field of expertise is brains and ballots why these specific cookies may so accurately reflect the popular vote.

"As social scientists say, this is an interest-

ing pattern and an intriguing one," says Dr. Christopher Federico, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for the Study of Political Psychology. "It also kind of feels a bit Groundhog Day to some extent—um, the event, not the movie—in the sense of it's sort of this bellwether."

To *really* access the reflective power of Hanisch's cookie poll, everyone involved knew it would require proper long-term exploration. Nonetheless, Federico was kind enough to shoot from the hip and offer an educated guess at what's up in Red Wing.

"Not everyone is going to buy a political cookie," he began. Facing this choice while mired in doughnuts, pies, cakes, bear claws, and the pressures and stresses of their daily lives as they wait inside a bakery that may or may not be convenient, these cookies become an identity thing. "And those who do purchase them, may be more representative of the group of people who actually show up and vote."

"I follow politics pretty closely," Federico continues, using himself as an example to highlight a pattern some of us take for granted, "but there's quite a bit of variability in the general population, and the extent to which people care about politics. A lot of people simply don't care all that much about politics until maybe the week before an election."

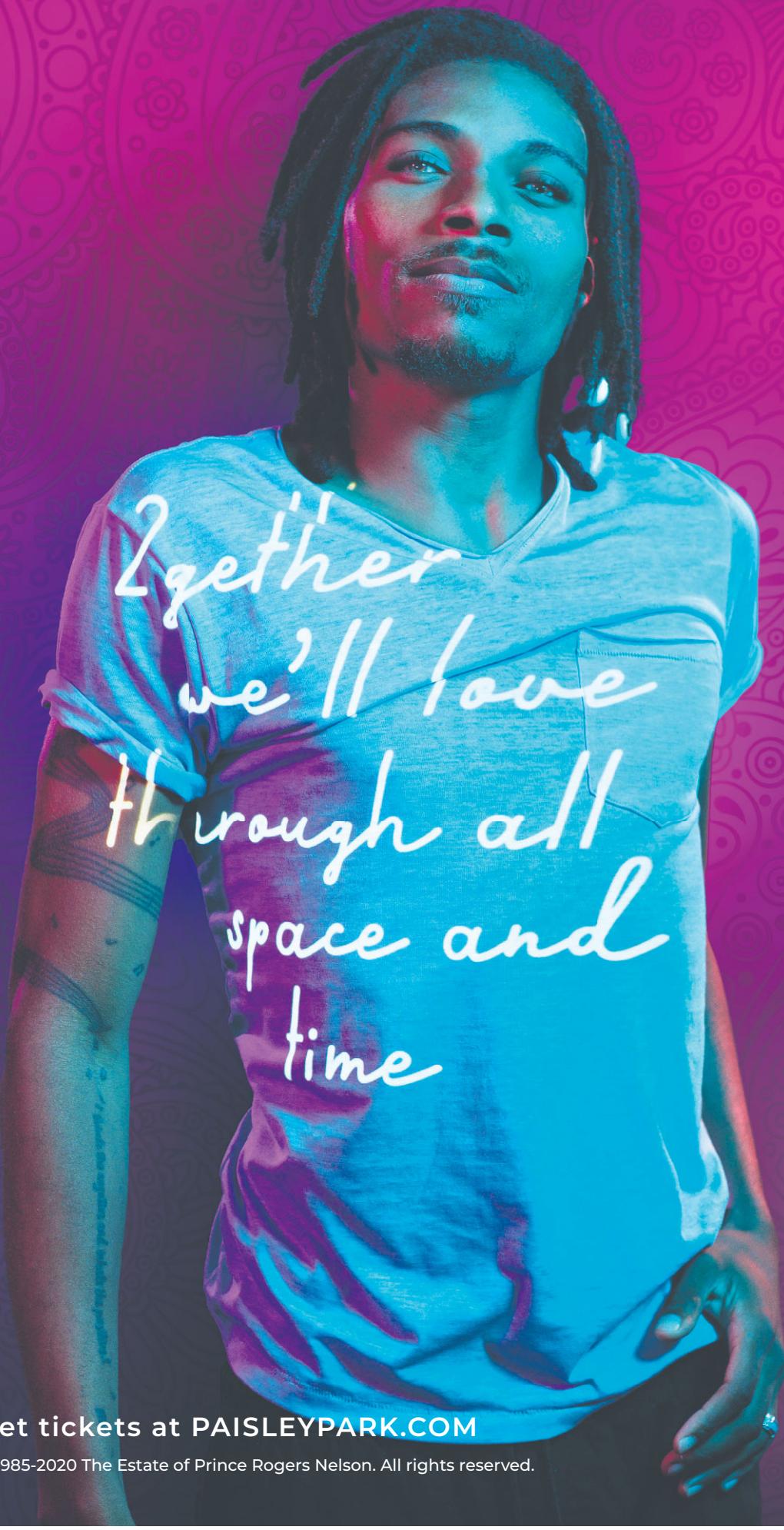
But if the cookie poll "rules" don't line up with that of real voting, how does that track?

Hanisch's cookie poll might just gauge the caring of people who, uh, care enough to care—and long term.

"One thing we do find with interest in politics is that in some respects, it's a like a trait," says the professor. "It tends to be stable over a lifetime—not perfectly stable; it varies somewhat with social conditions and what have you. But all other things being equal, people tend to be very consistently interested or uninterested in politics over the course of your lifetime."

So the solo motorcyclist the baker mentioned rolling through a few weeks back who snagged a dozen Trump cookies after seeing the WCCO story? Super-engaged! Or the grandma who bought three cookies spanning two candidates this year for her granddaughters? Doing her part to foster that engagement trait in her kin.

As for Bill Hanisch (who's more into sports himself, and "not, per se, your biggest political junkie"), he stays happy to host his historic event, where "any age can come in and feel like they're part of the voting process. We're just a little bakery in Red Wing trying to have fun." □



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Contrary to the popular saying, the customer isn't always right. In fact, quite often they're flat-out wrong.

Most industry workers typically face two options when a customer is being difficult: throw out an apology or quit in a blaze of glory. But the managers at Acme Comedy Co. have found a way to bite back.

Their *We Were Just Laughing* podcast launched this past spring, bringing Acme managers Brandon Simon, Joe Feely, and Hannah Rhodes together to share their stories about the worst, weirdest, and most memorable audience members.

"We kind of bonded over telling these kinds of stories," says Feely. "We'd go somewhere and grab a beer and vent about the night."

When the pandemic forced Acme to close its doors temporarily, the crew got the idea to turn those after-hours stories into podcast gold.

"Louis [Lee, Acme owner] bought all of this really expensive equipment so that we could do Zoom shows," says Simon. "So we were brainstorming things we could

do with it, and realized we had a lot of good content for a podcast."

Whether it's stories about names they've been called, people they've had to remove, or just weird interactions with unruly customers, the podcast is their chance to share their side of the story.

So what exactly are some of the worst things the hosts have had to deal with?

"One night I told this couple, 'Hey excuse me, there's no talking in the club,'" says Rhodes. "And the woman just looked at me and goes, 'Tito's and tonic, thanks.'"

For Simon, it's usually cheap shots about his hair that provide the best stories.

"They always go for my hair. One review I read [online] literally just said, 'The stupid cashier with the long hair was the worst

person ever.' At least I knew they were talking about me," he laughs.

But the best (or worst) example of how to be a shitty audience member might have been reserved for a night when Feely had to remove a woman from the club.

"This woman was heckling the comedian, so I finally told her she needed to leave," Feely says. "And she turns to me and goes, 'I hope your kids get cancer.'"

While the crew has plenty of stories to keep pumping out new episodes of the podcast, they admit that more often than not, audiences are extremely pleasant and don't wish cancer on anyone or their kids.

"In a normal year, we get about 70,000 people through the club," explains Simon. "And maybe .1 percent of them are memo-

rable for the wrong reasons. But those 70 people a year definitely stand out."

They also mine for comedy gold online, seeking out one-star reviews on sites like Yelp, Facebook, and more.

"Comedy is not meant for audiences to be quite [sic]," one reviewer on Trip Advisor states. "I have been to 50 plus shows and have never been told to be quite [sic] when I laugh. I will never be back and prefer the Cinema Grille [sic] where the audience is treated with respect. I think maybe there is something wrong with the manager emotionally and I feel bad for the staff as he chases away people trying to help his club survive."

Ex-Acme employees and comics have inquired about potential guest spots on the podcast, as the urge to relive shitty customer stories knows no expiration date. But whoever shows up, the podcast will continue to feel like an after-hours hang with your co-workers, no matter where it is you work.

"It's definitely a therapy session for us," says Rhodes.

Visit nolaughtrack.podbean.com to take a listen. CP

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Acme managers riff on shitty customers on new podcast

BY PATRICK STRAIT

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BY KEITH HARRIS

MeTooMpls couldn't be more timely a project. Maybe the combination of righteous unrest in the streets and pandemic-induced isolation at home was what sparked another kind of uprising here in June. Across social media, musicians and music fans alike began sharing stories of abuse and harassment in the Twin Cities scene that had been hidden away or dismissed for years.

For once, there were at least some repercussions. Rhymesayers dropped two of its artists; Doomtree was shaken. And local hip-hop was hardly the only site harboring abusers. There seemed to be no genre of local music where some predator, gaslighter, or plain old creep wasn't revealed. Just this past week, a thwarted MPR investigation into harassment led to 89.3 the Current dismissing a DJ.

Even if they'd planned it, then, the team behind *MeTooMpls* couldn't have picked a better time to release a compilation of 17 great Minnesota songwriters addressing this ongoing moment of reckoning. (Proceeds are being donated to Planned Parenthood.)

But in fact, the project's originators, musician Mischa Suennig and publicist Krista Vilinskis of Tinderbox Music, thought up the idea a ways back. They asked a bunch of female and nonbinary songwriters to write original songs centered on the concept of "Me Too," with no further guidelines. That left the parameters open wide enough to allow for personal reflection, character studies, and general observations on the moment.

For Mayda Miller, who records as Mayda and rocks a funky synth on "Oxygen Tank," this open-ended-ness is the strength of the project. "Everyone has their own experience; everyone is trying to look for their own way to tell their truth," says Miller. "Obviously women are trying to do that now and find that they're not alone."

And the results, while typically excellent, do vary by approach. Some, like Lydia Liza's "Apple in My Pocket," are ruminative; others, like Mary Bue's "How to Forgive Your Rapist," are blunt. Bluesy singer-songwriter Annie Mack contributed "Judge and Jury," which addresses the scrutiny that women face, whether they're entering a Planned

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

A new compilation, *MeTooMpls*, allows 17 local songwriters to address a galvanizing movement



ALBUM COVER

Parenthood or coming forward to name an abuser.

"I'm a pretty blue-collar writer," Mack says over the phone, while her three-year-old son competes with her interviewer for attention. "I wanted to capture that outlaw country vibe, where they weren't afraid of making political statements."

For some of the participants, this was an opportunity to branch out in a new direction. Ro Lorenzen, known for their work with indie pop-funk crew Static Panic, approached their song "Sides to Lonely" from a more personal angle.

"It's about not being taken seriously," they say—in several contexts. "Not being 'woman enough' or not being taking seriously when I reported an incident to HR, the ways that your fam-

ily responds when you share hardship and you want to heal, being told that you should have gotten over it. But you need your own time to heal—there's no fast track to that."

Tina Schlieske, who's been at this longer than maybe any of the other contributors here, assumed another woman's voice for "What Would You Pay (Dear Harvey)." "I was reading the transcript of Jessica Mann, the letter she wrote to Harvey Weinstein, and tried to convey the learning curve that women and men are going to have," she says. "I wanted to give a voice to a woman who was trying to move up in her career and encountered a predator who knows how to take advantage of that."

A concert featuring all the contribu-

tors was originally in the works, but the pandemic scuttled those plans. What's happening instead still sounds like quite the event. Three of the performers—Schlieske, Mayda, and Sarah Morris—will livestream sets from the Hook and Ladder this Thursday, with the other songwriters contributing pre-recorded sets. Andrea Swensson of the Current will host.

After this tumultuous summer, *MeTooMpls* offers an opportunity to take stock on what has changed—and what hasn't.

For Schlieske, who remembers days when it was hard to find a female sound engineer or even a woman who could drum and wasn't Lori Barbero, this was an opportunity to reflect on how the scene had grown and expanded. "There was more competition back then," she says. "Bars wouldn't want to have too many women on the bill, labels wouldn't want to sign too many women. We were treated as a side genre. It set us against each other so we weren't networking like we should."

"I've seen things change for women, but more importantly I've seen a lot of change in women," Miller says. "Especially within the last few years. Women gaining more power and more numbers together, banding together to sing their truth and say this is not right. Women are finally being heard. People being fired over things that would have been swept under the rug. We're slowly chipping away at it. We're actually making things happen now."

Mack notes, however, that women are still expected to shoulder all the burden. "The music industry is male-dominated, and men are not accountable," she says. "I'm tired of the silence from men, of men unwilling to hold other men accountable."

She sums it up simply: "If you have a man in your life you wouldn't want a female friend to do business with, then you have to ask why he's in your life."

Lorenzen has crafted an elegant metaphor to sum up the moment. "Every time I was seeing a new article or someone coming forward, it's like they were pulling handfuls of cement out of this cracked lot in the middle of the Twin Cities and filling it with the soil that would allow this community garden to grow. We have filled that lot with something beautiful, and now it's time to water it." **EP**

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): "It takes a lot of courage to be the same person on the outside that you are on the inside." Author Barbara De Angelis made that observation. I offer it up to you as a fun challenge. During the coming weeks, you may be strongly tempted to be different on the outside than you are on the inside. On the other hand, you'll have the necessary insight and valor to remain unified. In fact, you may ultimately create more congruence between your inside and outside than you have in a long time.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "People who deny the existence of dragons are often eaten by dragons. From within." Fantasy author Ursula K. Le Guin made that observation, and now I'm conveying it to you just in time for the season when you'll need it most. Please note that I am not predicting you'll be devoured by dragons from within. In offering you this oracle, my hope is that you will: 1. acknowledge the existence of metaphorical dragons; 2. locate where they hang out in your inner realms; 3. study them and get to know them better; 4. devise a strategy for dealing with them safely.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): "Don't let them tame you," advised flamboyant Gemini dancer Isadora Duncan. Who did she mean by "them"? The mainstream critics, who might have wished she cultivated a less maverick style? Her managers and handlers, who may have wanted her to tone herself down so she could earn maximum amounts of money? Her friends, who cringed when she did things like dancing on a table wearing an evening dress at a party? In accordance with astrological omens, Gemini, I invite you to take a survey of what influences might wish you were more docile, mild, or manageable. And then meditate on how you could consistently express the healthiest kind of wildness.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): In the Yoruba religion of Ifá, the English word "heart" has two different meanings and words. So says Yoruba priest Awo Falokun Fatumbi. The first heart is the organ that pumps blood through our bodies. It's called okén. Within the okén is the second heart: a power center that regulates the flow of emotions. It's called égbé. I believe your égbé will be exceptionally strong and clear and generous in the coming weeks, Cancerian. Your capacity to feel deeply and truly will be a gift to all those with whom you share it. It will also have the potential to enhance your appreciation for your own mysterious life. Wield your égbé with glee and panache!

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Ancient Greek philosopher Plato observed, "Do not train children to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each." The same principle applies to all of us adults who are committed to the goal of life-long learning. And according to my astrological analysis, it will be especially useful for you Leos to keep in mind during the coming weeks. It's time to energize your education! And here's the best way to gather the new teachings that are important for you to know: Follow what amuses your mind.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Christian author Frederick Buechner writes, "We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves, and I believe that to love ourselves means to extend to those various selves that we have been along the way the same degree of compassion and concern that we would extend to anyone else." Let's make his thought your keynote for the next two weeks. Now is an excellent time to take a journey through your past to visit all the other people you have been. As you do attend to this poignant work, be generous with each of your old selves. Forgive them for their errors and praise their beauty. Tell them how much you love them. Thank them for how they have made possible the life you're living now.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Seventy-nine-year-old Libran poet Robert Pinsky has had a triumphant life. He has published 19 books, including his own poems and essays, as well as translations of Italian and Polish poetry. For four years he served as the United States Poet Laureate. To what factors does he attribute his success? Here's one: "Whatever makes a child want to glue macaroni on a paper has always been strong in me," he testifies. He's referring to the primitive arts-and-crafts projects he enjoyed while growing up. In accordance with astrological omens, I encourage you, too, to get in touch and commune with the primal roots of the things you love to do. Reconnect with the original expressions of your passion for life.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "A single ego is an absurdly narrow vantage point from which to view the world," wrote occultist Aleister Crowley. Author Gore Vidal agreed, saying, "Since no one can ever know for certain whether or not his own view of life is the correct one, it is absolutely impossible for him to know if someone else's is the wrong one." All of us can perpetually benefit from this counsel. And it will be especially healthy for you to heed during the next four weeks. Humility will be a superpower. Blessings will flow your way if you don't need to be right all the time. As you refrain from regarding your own opinions as God's holy decrees, you will generate good fortune for yourself.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "It's a rare gift, to know where you need to be, before you've been to all the places you don't need to be," Author Ursula K. Le Guin wrote that. I'm passing it on to you because I suspect you now possess the power to claim this rare gift. In the coming days, you don't have to engage in endless evaluations of the numerous possibilities. You don't have to risk falling victim to overthinking. Your clear, strong gut hunches will tell you exactly where you need to be and how to get there.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Novelist Henry Miller was in many ways a quintessential Capricorn. He described himself as being "in love with love, always in search of the absolute, always seeking the unattainable." Feelings like those are why your astrological symbol is the mountain goat that's always climbing higher, questing toward the next pinnacle. At your best, you're determined to keep striving for the brightest, the strongest, the truest. Sometimes you overdo this admirable imperative, but mostly it's a beautiful quality. You are hereby authorized to express it with maximum wisdom and eagerness in the coming weeks.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): "Go catch a falling star," wrote poet John Donne (1572-1631) in his poem "Song." "Tell me who clef the Devil's foot," he went on to say. "Teach me to hear the mermaids singing." He wasn't being literal, but rather was indulging in poetic fancy to stretch his readers' imaginations. I'm offering you the spirit of Donne's poem, Aquarius, because you're ripe to transcend your limited notions about what's plausible and implausible. If you allow yourself to get extravagant and unruly in your fantasies, you may crack through shrunken expectations and break into a spacious realm of novel possibilities.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): I don't suggest you indulge daringly in sensual pleasures, cathartic exchanges of energy, and intoxicating pursuits of relief and release. The pandemic mandates us to be cautious about engaging in unmitigated bliss—even though the astrological omens suggest that if now were a normal time, such activities would be well worth focusing on. How can you resolve this dilemma? Possibilities: 1. Experiment zestfully with your live-in steady or spouse. 2. Get a COVID-19 test with a potential playmate, and if both test negative, celebrate boisterously. 2. Round up a dazzler with whom you can generate rapture via Zoom. 3. Fantasize about delightfully gracious debauchery. 4. Go solo.

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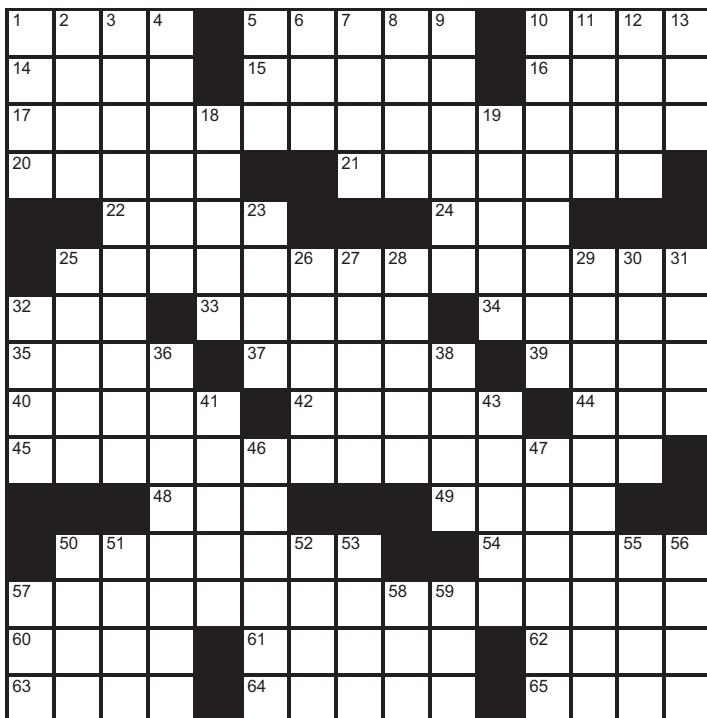
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CROSSWORD



SYMBOLIZING

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Groups not socially distancing | 54 Family vehicle | 29 Irregular bones |
| 5 Main ingredient in fougasse | 57 *Let | 30 Manila's island |
| 10 Warm up | 60 Villain who says "Put money in thy purse" | 31 Hot stretches in Haiti |
| 14 ___ polling | 61 One working on intros | 32 Ryobi rival |
| 15 HBO show about women skateboarders | 62 Gangsta rapper né Tracy Marrow | 36 Night light |
| 16 Indian export | 63 No-win situation | 38 QB Fitzpatrick |
| 17 *Ted talks, say | 64 Shook, as a defender | 41 With one's head in the clouds |
| 20 [God! This is so bor-ING!] | 65 More limited | 43 Snotty playground comeback |
| 21 Run | Down | 46 Totally stoic |
| 22 Get some air | 1 Room in the back | 47 Supervillain with the sidekicks Fat Bastard and Frau Farbissina |
| 24 Took charge | 2 Hard workers on a farm | |
| 25 *Buck inventor | 3 1989 LL Cool J single | |
| 32 Key typed with the left pinky | 4 One prepping for the second wave of the pandemic, e.g. | |
| 33 Dakota or Lakota, e.g. | 5 J. Edgar Hoover Building org. | |
| 34 Work tray label where the first word feels more appropriate | 6 Herd immunity spot? | |
| 35 IVF supply | 7 "Sailor and Girl" painter Dix | |
| 37 Polite rejection | 8 Sch. whose football mascot is Paydirt Pete | |
| 39 Long, longing look | 9 "Grease" setting | |
| 40 Some fantasy sports leagues | 10 ___ water (trying to stay afloat) | |
| 42 Country whose national language is Swahili | 11 "Java" horn blower | |
| 44 It came with the IMB PC jr | 12 Top | |
| 45 *Key song | 13 Actor Bentley | |
| 48 Bread to soak up aloo gobi | 18 League members | |
| 49 Towel Day and Pi Day | 19 Fountain with a papal coat of arms | |
| 50 Working actor's ID | 23 Analgesic's target | |
| | 25 Mayhem | |
| | 26 Bookworm's spots | |
| | 27 Sources of inspiration | |
| | 28 Lining out? | |

Last Week's Answer

A	R	A	B	N	A	C	H	T	P	A	N	S
R	O	L	L	A	R	B	O	R	A	L	O	T
M	A	L	E	M	I	S	T	P	I	G	G	Y
I	D	E	A	S	E	M	I	L	E			
E	I	G	H	T	Y	H	O	L	E	B	M	I
S	E	E	R	E	A	P	S	A	C	R	E	S
S	E	E	R	E	A	P	S	A	C	R	E	S
E	A	G	L	E	E	A	G	L	E	I	A	M
M	E	A	T	Y	G	E	N	E	R	A	T	O
O	W	L	S		B	R	O	D	Y			
P	O	L	Y	P	M	A	S	S	N	A	W	
E	K	E	S	H	O	R	T	Y	L	E	A	V
F	A	U	L	T	Y	G	U	Y	E	X	P	A
O	W	I	E	Y	A	P	A	T	E	L	L	A
P	L	A	X	A	N	I	M	E	L	I	S	P

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Misled

Why lie about your online dating profile?

Straight male here, divorced four years ago, just entering my fifties. I recently expanded my dating app parameters to see everyone in my area. I wanted to check out the competition and possibly give myself a little ego boost. I have a gay male friend who is in his forties. Mr. Forties has a boyfriend of two years who is in his twenties. They are great together—they vacation together, they quarantined together, they worked on redecorating a home together, etc. The problem is I spotted Mr. Forties on several dating apps. It would have been perfectly acceptable for him to say, “none of your business,” when I asked him why. Instead he told me they were old profiles, implying they predated Mr. Twenties. He lists pets on his profiles that he adopted a few months ago. I have a sore spot about this behavior because my ex-wife started “auditioning” my replacement before we filed divorce papers. I really don’t like being lied to. What do I do? Confront Mr. Forties? Mind my own business and hope Mr. Forties doesn’t crush Mr. Twenties by cheating? Help!

FUMBLED INTO FRAUGHT TERRAIN
INVOLVING EXPANDED SEARCH

Maybe Mr. Forties and Mr. Twenties have an open relationship. Maybe they have a closed relationship but regard flirting on dating apps as harmless. Maybe Mr. Forties was charged with finding a guest star for a threesome. Or maybe Mr. Forties has profiles on dating apps for the same reason you expanded the parameters on your profiles, FIFTIES: for the ego boost.

If it was any of the above—if there was an innocent explanation—why did Mr. Forties go with, “Those were old profiles,” instead of, “We sometimes have threesomes”? Well, some straight people have a hard time wrapping their heads around the kind of non-monogamy practiced by most gay male couples. Hell, some closed-minded gay people have a hard time with it. So he gave you the answer a lot of people prefer to hear when they ask pointed questions of partnered friends they assume to be monogamous: “Of course I’m not sleeping around! Those were old profiles! My monogamous boyfriend would never

want me to shove my monogamous dick down his throat while some other dude non-monogamously rearranges his guts! Heavens! We’re far too busy redecorating our lovely home to arrange threesomes!”

Look, FIFTIES, you put a question to Mr. Forties that he wasn’t obligated to answer. So what do you do now? Nothing. You drop it. The issue you shouldn’t have brought up in the first place? You don’t bring it up again. Even if Mr. Forties is auditioning replacements for Mr. Twenties—even if he lied to you for a selfish, self-serving reason—it’s still none of your business.



Dan Savage

My boyfriend and I first heard the terms “sexual monogamy” and “social monogamy” on your podcast. They describe us: not sexually monogamous, but we present that way socially and most people in our lives assume we are. Including my mother. We’re both from Republican families that struggled to accept us. My attitude is that if my brothers don’t have to tell our parents about their kinks, I don’t have to tell them about my threesomes. (Both of my older brothers have confided in me about their kinks, which I wish they hadn’t.) But it got back to me that my Trump-worshipping, Obama-despising mother only accepts me and my boyfriend because we are “good” gays. Good because we’re monogamous, like good straight people, and not promiscuous, like bad gay people. Now I feel like I should say something. But what?

THEY REALLY UNDERESTIMATE
MY PROCLIVITIES

Here’s a script: “Good people can be promiscuous, Mom, and awful people can be monogamous. Take Donald Trump. That asshole has been married three times and cheated on every one of his wives. Barack Obama, whom you despise, has been married once and has never been caught cheating. Which means Obama either doesn’t cheat or, like everything else he’s ever done, from being someone’s husband to being our president, he’s better at it than Donald Trump.”

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